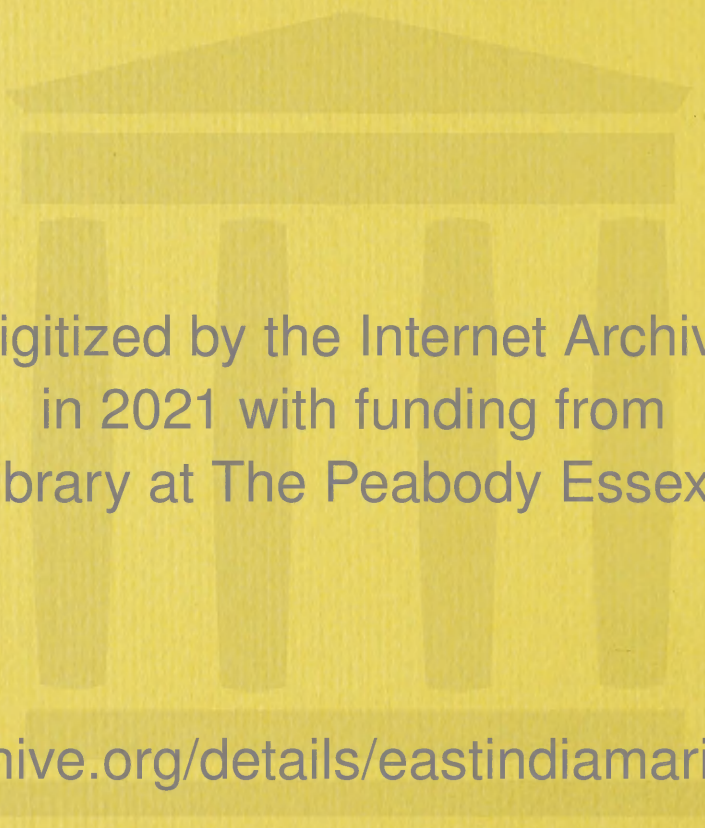




# EAST INDIA MARINE HALL: 1824-1974

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# EAST INDIA MARINE HALL: 1824-1974

By PHILIP CHADWICK FOSTER SMITH

*With a Foreword by*

WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL

*and a biographical sketch of its architect, Thomas Waldron Sumner*

by CHRISTOPHER P. MONKHOUSE

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## Foreword

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FOR the Peabody Museum of Salem the year 1974 contained two significant anniversaries: the 175th of the founding of the Salem East India Marine Society and the 150th of the construction of East India Marine Hall. For the anniversary in 1949 the museum published my *The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem, A Sesquicentennial History*. Now, it is publishing this picture book about the hall and its immediate surroundings.

Philip Chadwick Foster Smith, Curator of Maritime History, is a scholarly editor who has the uncommon ability of translating the results of his research into drawings. During the winter of 1973-1974, when demolition was going on in preparation for the construction of a new wing of the museum, he made a series of drawings that showed the constantly changing surroundings of East India Marine Hall in the course of a

century and a half. Although he originally planned these as illustrations for a lecture, I found them so informative as a document in urban history that I proposed their publication in this permanent form. In these fourteen drawings we see a microcosm of urban history over 150 years.

East India Marine Hall was built in a handsome residential street, well away from the brawls and smells of the waterfront. We are accustomed to "before" and "after" views, but where, except in the inspired cartoons of Osbert Lancaster, do we ordinarily find a record of the details of change? In his enchantingly satirical *Progress at Pelvis Bay*, first published in 1936, Mr. Lancaster traced "with loving enthusiasm the development of a flourishing seaside resort from the original poverty-stricken fishing village to the present magnificent marine metropolis covering many acres of what

has heretofore been virgin downland." He began his Foreword with the observation: "Of the Emperor Augustus it was said that he found Rome brick and left it marble, of the makers of modern Pelvis Bay it might well be said that they found it weather-boarding and left it chromium-plate." His drawings show the sea-front in 1790, 1840, 1890, and 1930 with lugubrious effect. In *Drayneflete Revealed*, published in 1949, Mr. Lancaster depicted the metamorphoses of another imaginary town from Roman times to the present day. In his drawings one sees how shop fronts invaded the gardens of handsome houses; how "progress" in the form of business and honky-tonk transformed the character of what had once been attractive. Mr. Smith's drawings are far from imaginary. They are based upon careful investigation of the changes in land use in Essex Street, decade by decade. But they tell the same story as Mr. Lancaster's. The only difference is in a happy ending, for the last of Mr. Smith's series depicts the new wing, now rising, which has been designed with great care to complement, rather than quarrel with, East India Marine Hall in its form and materials.

Mr. Smith has done more than show the changing setting of East India Marine Hall; he has discovered its architect. In my sesquicentennial history, I noted that the business of buying land and planning and erecting the building was deputed to a Salem East India Marine Hall Corporation, whose records have not survived. I wrote in 1949: "That the name of the architect of the building is not known is singularly regrettable, for the hall has great character and dignity." Last winter Mr. Smith came upon an article in the *Salem Evening News* of 14 August 1924 that stated that Thomas W. Sumner had designed both East India Marine Hall and the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square in Salem. No authority was given for the statement. One does not necessarily trust centennial newspaper reporting as the highest form of historical evidence. And even if Sumner were the architect, who was he? His name was absent from Walter H. Kilham's *Boston After Bulfinch*, which is the only general account of nineteenth-century Boston architecture. But Mr. David McKibbin's notes at the Boston Athenæum furnished Sumner's dates and parentage, indicating that he was a Bos-

ton architect and housewright, born in 1768, who died in 1849.

The Peabody Museum owned proposed front and side elevations and a ground plan for East India Marine Hall, but these were unsigned. Mr. Smith, like a good trufflehound, then went to the Essex Institute to see what he could discover about the Barton Square Church in Salem. There he found Thomas W. Sumner's bill to "The New Congregational Society in Salem" for "drawings for the new meeting house & superintending the building of it," submitted on 19 January 1825 and receipted on 15 February 1825, as well as signed drawings. As the words "Front Elevation" on both the church and the East India Marine Hall drawings were unmistakably in the same hand, the case was proved! Whoever wrote for the *Salem Evening News* in 1924 knew what he was talking about.

By a happy coincidence the architectural historian Christopher P. Monkhouse, who has been based in

London in recent years, was paying a brief visit to Boston at this time. I told him of Mr. Smith's discovery. As he knew more about Sumner than the rest of us, he kindly consented to contribute a biographical sketch to accompany Mr. Smith's drawings. From this I learned that Sumner had had a hand in the building of Divinity Hall in Cambridge, where I lived from 1922 to 1928, as well as being the architect of East India Marine Hall, where I worked daily from 1936 to 1942, and which I have always loved.

The Peabody Museum of Salem, as a permanent reminder of its double anniversaries of 1974, thus offers in a brief compass a case history of what has happened to a block of an American city over a century and a half, and the first published account of a Boston architect whose work gave pleasure to many people who never until now knew his name.

WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL



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## Thomas Waldron Sumner

### *A Biographical Sketch of the Architect of East India Marine Hall*

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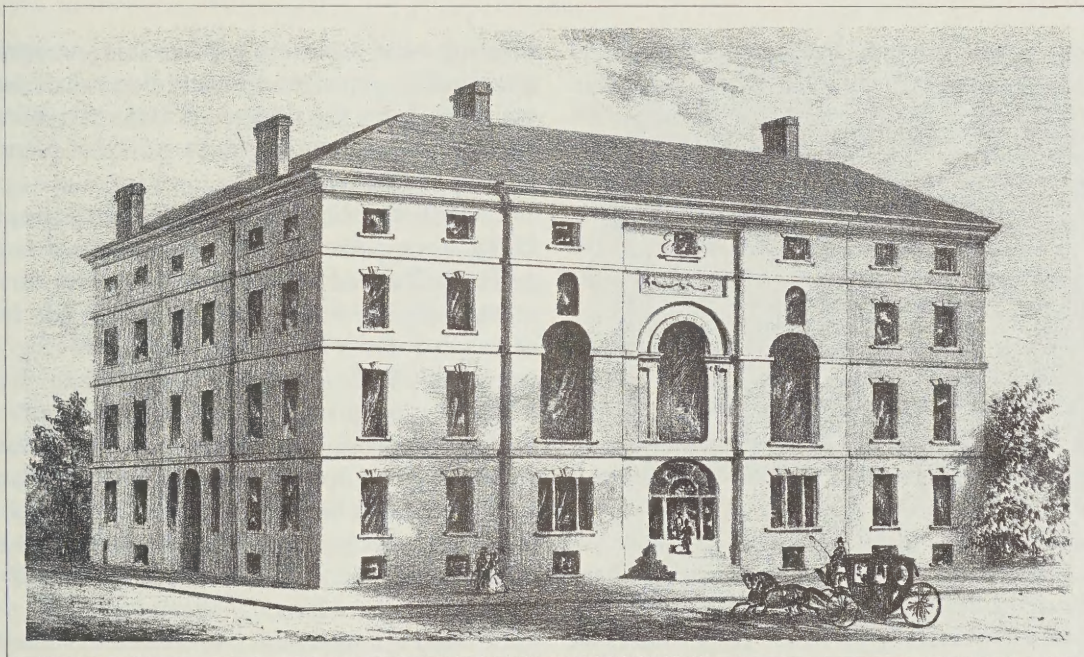
AS 1974 marks both the 175th anniversary of the founding of the East India Marine Society and the 150th anniversary of the building of its hall, it seemed an appropriate, if not unique, opportunity to review the career of the hall's forgotten architect, Thomas Waldron Sumner (1768–1849). The following biographical sketch of Sumner is therefore offered in the hopes of not only redeeming from anonymity a once active Boston builder, but also, as a consequence, making it possible for the first time to place East India Marine Hall into the broader architectural context of Sumner's other known buildings, and those designed by his better-known contemporaries: Charles Bulfinch, Asher Benjamin, Alexander Parris, and Solomon Willard.

Thomas Waldron Sumner was born in Boston on 28

October 1768 to James and Alice Waldron Sumner. His father was a housewright, and in 1776 was employed to lay out "lines for the works of defence erecting in and about the town of Providence" for which he received twelve pounds. On the basis of this work, he was appointed Assistant Engineer of the State of Rhode Island with the rank of Captain, and in 1777 was elevated to the rank of Major. By 1778 James Sumner had returned to Boston with his family.<sup>1</sup> In view of the fact that James Sumner was a housewright, and had distinguished himself in the American Revolution as a military engineer, it is not at all surprising to find Thomas Waldron Sumner following in his father's footsteps.

The first mention of Thomas Waldron Sumner as a housewright is found in a deed for land he purchased





T. W. Sumner Delin. Archt. Feb<sup>y</sup> 1802

J. H. Bufford's Lith. Boston.

FIG. 1. Lithographic view based on designs of proposed hall for the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association submitted in competition by Thomas W. Sumner in February 1802.

*American Antiquarian Society*

in Cambridge Street in 1793. The first time he is listed in the *Boston Directory* as a housewright and living in Cambridge Street is in 1796. In that same directory his father is also listed as a housewright, as well as two of his cousins, Samuel and John Gabriel Sumner, all of which is a good indication that Thomas Sumner was given much mutual encouragement and support at the outset of his career, not to mention those invaluable contacts, so vital to future success.

Thomas Sumner sought to extend his professional contacts beyond the immediate family circle by becoming an active member of two organizations recently founded to benefit members of the building trade. In 1800 he was elected a member of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association (founded in 1795), and in 1804 he was a founding member of the Society of Associated Housewrights. In the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association he served as a Trustee from 1802–1804, and also in 1802 he served on a committee to discuss the possibility of erecting a permanent hall for the Association. The committee voted to offer a premium for the best plan prepared, and although the

Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association did not actually get around to building a hall until 1860, and then from the designs of Hammatt Billings, this earlier competition did produce a set of plans and elevations by Sumner.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the existence of a lithographic view based upon these competition designs and made by J. H. Bufford of Boston in the middle of the nineteenth century, it is possible to gain a fair impression of what Sumner originally envisioned (fig. 1). This project is of the greatest importance in that it provides the earliest known evidence of Sumner's ability to design a building. Also, this project gave Sumner the opportunity to design a meeting hall. His consequent familiarity with the requirements for this type of building was to put him in an advantageous position when it came to designing East India Marine Hall in Salem twenty-two years later, as the lithographic view here illustrated attests.

The Society of Associated Housewrights was organized along much the same lines as the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, but drew its

membership exclusively from the Boston building trade; Sumner seems to have played the role of liaison officer between the two organizations.<sup>3</sup> Sumner was the first Treasurer of the Society of Associated Housewrights, and later its President, while Asher Benjamin was a Trustee. Sumner, Benjamin, and Jeremiah Gardner formed the committee in 1804 to design the Society's certificate of membership, of which a copy is here illustrated (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> Two years later the process was slightly reversed when Sumner was on another committee to examine an advance copy of *The American Builder's Companion, or a New System of Architecture* which had been submitted by its authors, Asher Benjamin and Daniel Raynerd.<sup>5</sup> All of this committee serving placed Sumner at the heart of decision making in the building trade, and his consequent familiarity with everybody else's ideas was to have a profound influence on his own work.

After Sumner's unexecuted design for the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association in 1802, the next record of his known work are two floor plans. Other than the fact that they are labeled "Plan No. 1" and



This Certifies, that *He* was an ORIGINAL  
*Member of the Boston Housewright Society.*  
*Instituted October 28. 1804. & Med.*  
*Per*  
*1804*

FIG. 2. Certificate of membership in the Society of Associated Housewrights of the Town of Boston designed by Asher Benjamin, Jeremiah Gardner, and Thomas W. Sumner, and engraved by Daniel Raynerd, in 1804.

*Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston*

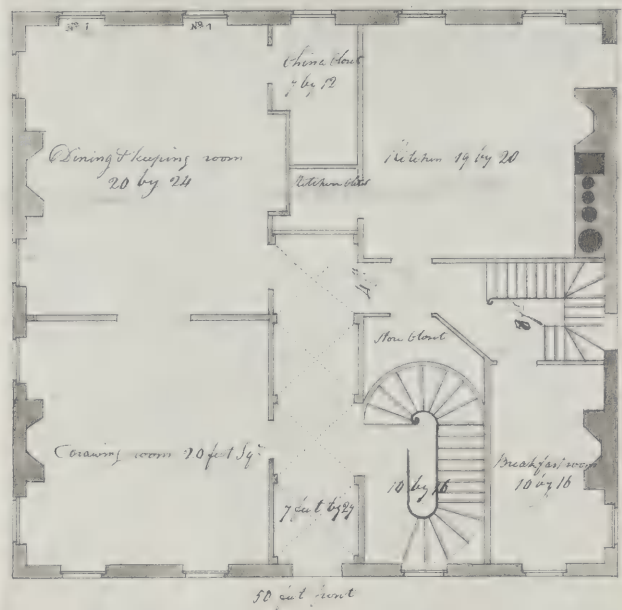


FIG. 3. Unidentified floor plan for a house signed by Thomas W. Sumner, and dated Boston, September 21, 1804.  
Boston Athenæum

“Plan No. 3” and dated “Boston, Sept. 6, 1804,” and “Boston, Sept. 21, 1804,” respectively, they are unidentified (fig. 3). Whether they are from a series of alternative floor plans for the same house, or different houses, it is impossible to determine. However, Plan No. 3 does have a note in the margin, and this reveals that Sumner or his patron had that romantic urge to bring nature into the house.

Note: The windows in the dining room No. 1 may run to the floor to make a passage to the yard or garden that way.

The plans are now bound into a volume of architectural drawings by Alexander Parris. Although there is no indication of how Sumner’s plans came to be bound with the Parris material, they may well form part of a lively exchange of books and ideas which existed between the two men; and, as will be shown later, this exchange was very influential in the design of East India Marine Hall. This collection of Parris and Sumner drawings is now in the Boston Athenæum and was ac-



quired by purchase out of income from the John Bromfield Fund in 1906.<sup>6</sup>

To document Thomas Sumner's activity between 1805 and 1817, it is necessary to turn to the Boston town records where it is recorded that he was a Representative to the General Court of Massachusetts between 1805 and 1811, and again in 1816 and 1817. In 1813 he represented Ward Six to consider a petition for building a mill dam and turnpike road from Beacon Street to Roxbury, and in 1814 he was elected to a committee to consider the delinquency of the late Treasurer and Collector of Boston. By leading an active public life, Sumner was following in the footsteps of another prominent Boston builder, Thomas Dawes, who served as a State Senator while at the same time collaborating with Charles Bulfinch on such projects as the erection of the Massachusetts State House, and the Almshouse on Leverett Street.<sup>7</sup> As Dawes's active political career quite obviously did not serve as a deterrent to his work as a builder, it is also likely that this was similarly the case with Sumner. Consequently,

there must be several buildings which have yet to be documented as his work from his political years, 1805 to 1817, and Parkman's Market might just possibly be one of them.

Parkman's Market was built in Cambridge Street in 1810, and was long attributed to Charles Bulfinch because of its close similarity to his Boylston Hall of 1809. Harold Kirker in his recent book *The Architecture of Charles Bulfinch* has observed that "the unknown author of Parkman's Market was no doubt a sound craftsman with a good knowledge of Bulfinch's detailing. . . ."<sup>8</sup> Not only does this description fit Thomas Sumner, but also it should be recalled that Sumner had owned land on Cambridge Street since 1793, and in 1810 was residing on nearby Chambers Street which Parkman's Market was calculated to serve along with the rest of Boston's West End. But until more documentation comes to light, this attribution must remain more suggestive than conclusive.

After Sumner's unidentified plans of 1804, the next documented example of his work is not until 1819



**FIG. 4.** Proposed elevation for the Suffolk County Buildings on Leverett Street, designed in competition by Thomas W. Sumner in 1819.  
*Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston*

when he and Alexander Parris took part in a competition for the design of the Suffolk County Buildings in Leverett Street.<sup>9</sup> This scheme included a central brick building to house a courthouse and a keeper's house, as well as a pair of flanking stone buildings to serve as jails for criminals and debtors respectively. Although Parris won the competition, a full set of Sumner's unsigned competition designs are now in the collections of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (fig. 4).<sup>10</sup> With a cupola sitting astride the central building's pitched roof, and Gibbs surrounds for the entrances, Sumner's designs are rather reminiscent of a grouping of colonial public buildings, and reveal to what a large extent Sumner was a traditionalist. Only some of the window surrounds on the central building indicate that Sumner had some awareness of contemporary design.

By way of comparison, Alexander Parris's winning designs showed the central courthouse and keeper's house with a low hipped roof, a trabeated granite porch, and free of all unnecessary architectural detail.<sup>11</sup> In these ways the building was reduced to its cubic

common denominators in keeping with the then current theories of the architectural pundits, and to which Parris so actively subscribed. The Suffolk County Buildings on Leverett Street were in use from 1823 until they were replaced by Gridley Bryant's Charles Street Jail in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Despite the fact that the designs for the public buildings on Leverett Street show Sumner to have been far less adventurous than Parris, and here it should be noted that Parris was twelve years younger than Sumner, this disparity in their approach and age did not prevent them from having a lively exchange of ideas and books, as has already been hinted at.<sup>12</sup> As members of the Society of Associated Housewrights (Parris had been elected a member in 1817), they served together on many of the same committees, including one in 1818 to revise their *Rules of Work* for a new published edition. In 1823 they served on a committee with the purpose of acquiring the Social Architectural Library of Boston to form the basis for the Associated Society of Housewrights' library, and this end was accomplished.<sup>13</sup>

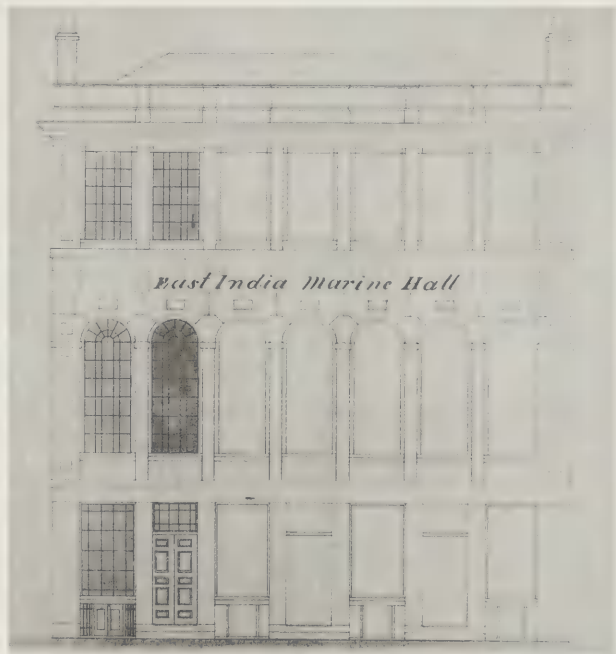


FIG. 5. Proposed Essex Street elevation for East India Marine Hall, designed by Thomas W. Sumner in 1824.  
*Peabody Museum of Salem*

Outside the context of committees, there was even more scope for an exchange of ideas and books between Parris and Sumner. For example, on 12 October 1822, Parris bought from Sumner his copy of that vast tome, Batty Langley's *Ancient Masonry* (London, 1736).<sup>14</sup> This event is more than of passing interest because plate 26 illustrates the portico of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, which in turn might well have inspired Parris's pair of porticoes for Faneuil Hall Market in 1824. By the same token, Parris's trabeated granite facades for the North and South Market Street blocks flanking Faneuil Hall Market could well have served as the source for Sumner's design for the front elevation of East India Marine Hall in that same year (fig. 5).<sup>15</sup>

The first proposals for the construction of East India Marine Hall were made in May 1824, but owing to the fact that the records of the East India Marine Hall Corporation have not survived, little else is known about the erection of the building. Fortunately, however, Thomas Sumner's original architectural drawings have survived, and they reveal that in the course of erecting the hall it underwent certain modifications,





FIG. 6. Proposed side elevation for East India Marine Hall, designed by Thomas W. Sumner in 1824.  
*Peabody Museum of Salem*

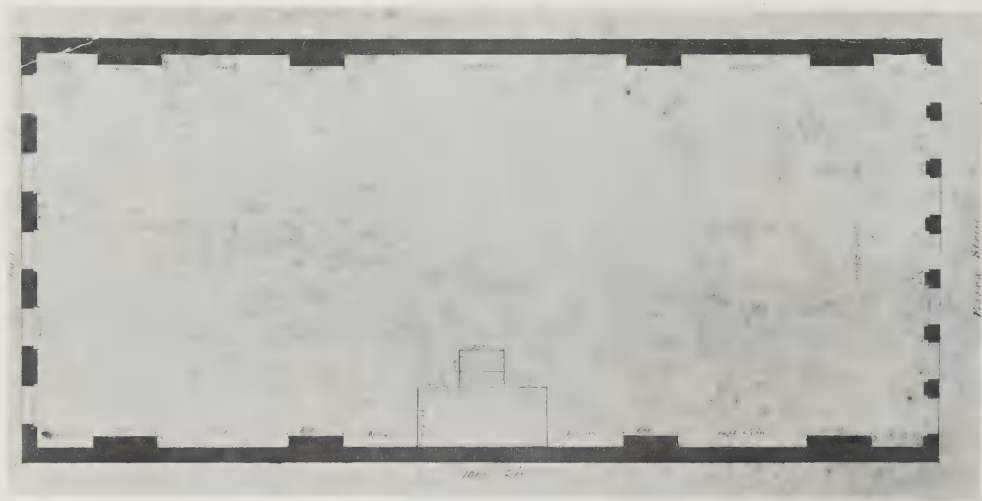


FIG. 7. Plan for second floor of East India Marine Hall, designed by Thomas W. Sumner in 1824.  
*Peabody Museum of Salem*

and most noticeably in the removal of the top tier of windows (figs. 5–6) on the Essex Street elevation to allow for the present gable pierced by a circular window.<sup>16</sup> This modification similarly affected the side elevation on the passage. The hall was dedicated with much pomp and ceremony in October 1825.<sup>17</sup>

Though outside the context of Thomas Sumner's architectural career, it is perhaps worth mentioning here that his Essex Street elevation for East India Marine Hall did produce at least one offspring, and this was the granite-faced Mariner's Church on Fore Street in Portland, Maine (fig. 8). Built between 1828 and 1829 from the designs of an unknown architect, it was at the time Portland's largest building. Although its main purpose was to provide a chapel for seamen, shops on the ground floor and office space above were included to produce income that would free the building of debt within fifteen years. After serving in recent years as a warehouse, it has been restored to accommodate shops and offices, and so continues to stand in Portland as a striking parallel to East India Marine Hall.

In Salem, Sumner also was commissioned in June 1824 to design and superintend the erection of the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square, for which he was paid \$396.52 at the time of completion in 1825. Although the church was destroyed early in the twentieth century after having been converted into a theater, a full set of architectural drawings for it is preserved, along with related bills, in the collections of the Essex Institute, and thus make it the best-documented building by Sumner (fig. 9). With the exception of the lantern sitting astride the pitched roof, the immediate model for this classical temple, with its portico *in antis*, was once again a building fresh from the drawing board of Alexander Parris—the Twelfth Congregational Church of Boston built in the heart of the West End in 1824.<sup>18</sup>

In the following year Thomas Sumner received another ecclesiastical commission when Harvard College employed him to take charge of Solomon Willard's designs for the first major college building constructed outside of Harvard Yard, Divinity Hall (fig. 10).<sup>19</sup> He apparently made modifications to Willard's work, and

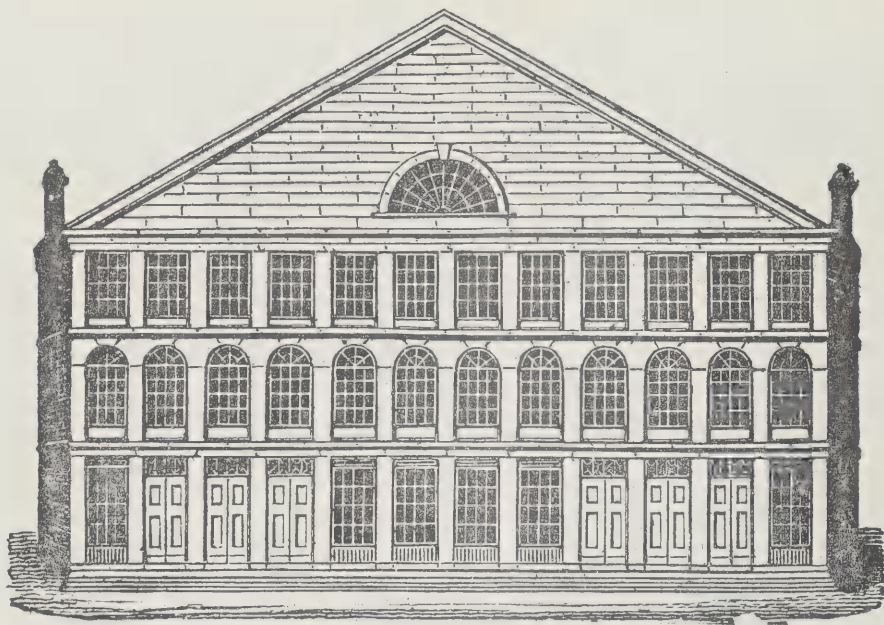


FIG. 8. Woodcut elevation of the Mariner's Church, Fore Street, Portland, Maine, designed and built by an unidentified architect in 1828-1829.

*Maine Historical Society*



these could partly account for the similarities between Divinity Hall's central bay and the Essex Street elevation of East India Marine Hall, both having in common round-headed windows and recessed rectangular panels crowned by a gable. The prototypal plan for Divinity Hall had already been developed by Charles Bulfinch in his design for University Hall of 1813-1814. Thus, both buildings have twin entrances flanking a prominent central space used as a chapel.

Despite the fact that Thomas Sumner did not die until 29 May 1849, the last building he is known to have designed was the South Congregational Church (fig. 11), built for a new religious society that was (in spite of its name) Unitarian, on Washington Street, Boston, in 1827.<sup>20</sup> *Bowen's Picture of Boston*, published in 1838, thus described it: "It is a large and commodious house, containing 124 pews on the floor, and 42 in the galleries. Its appearance is neat; the ceiling is flat, and is brought lower than in most other churches; the pulpit probably unites more excellencies in its construction than any other in Boston. Neither so high as in the old churches, nor so open as in some modern ones, it pre-



FIG. 9. Front elevation for the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square, Salem, designed by Thomas W. Sumner in June 1824.

*Essex Institute, Salem*

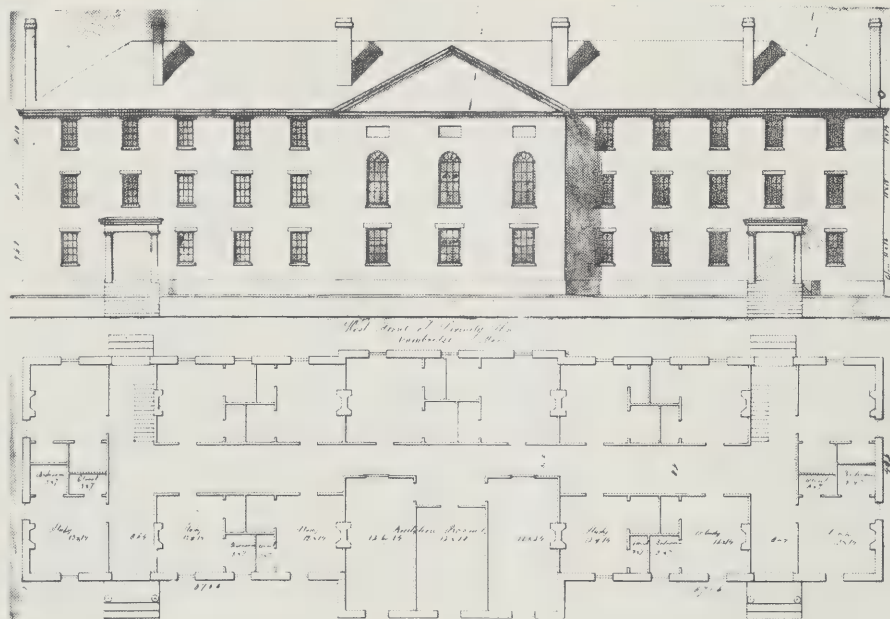


FIG. 10. Front elevation for Divinity Hall, Harvard University, by Solomon Willard, and then modified by Thomas W. Sumner in 1825. This elevation was drawn by William Sparrell in 1834.

*Harvard University Archives*

sents a front of good proportions, and affords ample room for all the clergymen who may be called to officiate on public occasions. It is situated in a recess, the wall of which is covered by drapery arranged with much taste, and through a door in which the minister may descend to the vestry. This is admirably planned, consisting of two large rooms connected by folding doors." As business encroached upon Washington Street, the South Congregational Society moved in 1862, during the pastorate of Edward Everett Hale, to a new church designed by N. J. Bradlee on Union Park Street in the South End. Sumner's church of 1827 has long since been demolished.

As no record of any later work of Sumner's has yet been found, there are twenty-two years of his architectural career unaccounted for. On the other hand, Sumner is listed in the Boston directories between 1827 and 1832 as having a counting room at 5 Merchants Row, and this certainly suggests that in the latter part of his life he was more concerned with being a businessman than an architect. Indeed, there are hints of this tendency when he was still actively engaged in the



FIG. 11. View of the South Congregational Church, Washington and Castle Streets, Boston, designed by Thomas W. Sumner in 1827, as illustrated in *The Boston Almanac for the Year 1843*.  
*Boston Athenaeum*

building trade. The Suffolk County deeds, for example, reveal that he was constantly buying and selling land throughout his life. In 1810 he had been a shareholder in the Exchange Coffee House, and in 1818 he had served on a committee of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association for the purpose of setting up a Mechanic's Bank.<sup>21</sup> That he was successful at making money as a businessman may be inferred from the change of his residential address from Chambers Street in the West End of Boston to Brookline in about 1817. Thereafter, Sumner is referred to in deeds as a "Gentleman of Brookline."

Even if Thomas Sumner were less involved in designing and erecting buildings during the last twenty-two years of his life, there is evidence that his earlier commitment was not forgotten, especially by his colleagues in the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association and the Society of Associated Housewrights. In 1830, a presentation copy of *A Description of the Tremont House*—that earliest of architectural monographs for an American building—was given to Sumner with the following inscription:

Thomas W. Sumner, Esq.  
with the respects  
and friendly salutations of  
William H. Eliot  
Isaiah Rogers.<sup>22</sup>

And twenty-two years later James T. Buckingham in his *Personal Memoirs and Recollections of Editorial Life* (Boston, 1852) warmly recalled how Sumner tried in 1817 to take out a full year's subscription, at a cost of three dollars, for *The New England Galaxy and Masonic Magazine*, Buckingham's first independent publishing venture. In this Sumner displayed more faith in the project than even Buckingham was able to muster, and consequently Sumner was only allowed to buy a half year's subscription for a magazine which was soon to prove highly successful and enjoy a long life.<sup>23</sup>

By way of summarizing Thomas Sumner's career, it should be pointed out that what he might have lacked in originality in his designs for buildings, he more than compensated for in his ability to perceive and champion quality in the work of others. Therefore, a build-

ing such as East India Marine Hall should be viewed as a lasting compliment to the architect behind the idea, and in this case Alexander Parris, as well as a handsome, if until now forgotten, memorial to the man

who actually designed and built it, Thomas Waldron Sumner.

CHRISTOPHER P. MONKHOUSE

#### FOOTNOTES

1. William Sumner Appleton, *Record of the Descendants of William Sumner of Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1636*, Boston, 1879, pp. 21, 49.

2. James T. Buckingham, *Annals of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association*, Boston, 1853, p. 75.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

4. *Minutes of the Society of Associated Housewrights of the Town of Boston* (MS. now on deposit at the Massachusetts Historical Society from the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association).

5. *Ibid.*

6. The Alexander Parris drawings date primarily from the first decade of the nineteenth century when he was practicing in Portland.

7. Harold Kirker, *The Architecture of Charles Bulfinch*, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 101, 144.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

9. The MS. documents relating to the erection of the Suffolk County Buildings on Leverett Street form part of the Adlow Collection now in the Boston Public Library.

10. The positive identification of these drawings as the work of Thomas Sumner is due to their careful restoration by Capt. George Cunha. In the course of this restoration work Capt. Cunha retrieved the binding tape which was holding the several sheets of drawings together. These tapes proved to be fragments of discarded architectural drawings, and fortunately one of the fragments bore part of Sumner's signature.

11. Knowledge of the Suffolk County Buildings on Leverett Street as designed by Parris is based upon a set of drawings for



the central court house and jailer's house. As these drawings are dated 1821, they must be revised drawings for those he submitted in the 1819 competition, and they are now in a private collection.

12. This exchange could have been encouraged by the fact that Sumner had a house on Chambers Street, while Parris lived just around the corner on Poplar Street.

13. *Minutes of the Society of Associated Housewrights of the Town of Boston, op. cit.*

14. This particular copy is now in the collections of Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth, Massachusetts. As Pilgrim Hall was designed by Parris, this is a highly appropriate place for the book to be housed.

15. Charles Bulfinch introduced this type of trabeated granite facade in his 1814 design for the Massachusetts Fire and Marine Insurance Office on the south side of State Street between Congress and Kilby Streets, and consequently it also might have served as a model for Sumner (Kirker, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 293-294).

16. As the drawing of the Essex Street elevation of East India Marine Hall has been cut down, this probably accounts for the loss of Sumner's signature in the lower right corner. Owing to this trimming of the drawing, plus disappearance of the East India Marine Hall Corporation papers, Sumner's authorship went unnoticed until the recent discovery of an article in the *Salem Evening News* for 14 August 1924 in which it is noted that Sum-

ner designed both the hall and the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square in Salem. The close similarity between Sumner's signed drawings for the church and the hall confirmed his authorship of the latter building.

17. For further discussion of the hall, see: Walter Muir Whitehill, *The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem, a Sesquicentennial History*, Salem, 1949, pp. 41-44.

18. This building still stands in the West End, but now serves as a Catholic church. The fact that Parris was its architect is recorded in Lewis G. Pray, *Historical Sketch of the Twelfth Congregational Society in Boston*, Boston, 1863.

19. Bainbridge Bunting and Robert Nylander, *Report Four: Old Cambridge*, Cambridge, 1973, p. 156.

20. What little is known of this commission comes from an article describing the cornerstone laying ceremony in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 13 August 1827, p. 2. Mrs. John M. Norton of the Boston Athenæum provided the wood engraving reproduced as fig. 11.

21. Buckingham, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

22. This particular copy is in the collections of the Boston Athenæum.

23. James T. Buckingham, *Personal Memoirs and Recollections of Editorial Life*, Boston, 1852, vol. 1, p. 81.



FIG. 12. East India Marine Hall, 1773.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of collecting information of Thomas Waldron Sumner, the following people have been most helpful: John Alden, Bainbridge Bunting, Miss Rose Briggs, Abbott Lowell Cummings, George Cunha, David McKibbin, Mrs. John Norton, William Osgood, Earle Shettleworth, Philip Chadwick Foster Smith, Richard Stoddard, and Walter Muir Whitehill.

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## Introduction to the Sketches

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**A**FTER twenty-five years of occupying rented quarters, the East India Marine Society reached a momentous decision in 1824 to remove its meeting room and cabinets of "natural and artificial curiosities" into an entirely new structure. A committee was formed to seek out a suitable parcel of land upon which to build, while an independent body, known as the East India Marine Hall Corporation, came into being about the same time. It was the Corporation, not the Society, which was to build, own, and administer the Hall, although the Society itself would hold a substantial block of the shares in it.

The land so acquired was purchased by the Corporation on 22 July 1824 for the sum of \$4,000. It was situated on the southerly side of Essex Street, the principal thoroughfare through Salem, nearly opposite the junction of St. Peter Street. On it, stood a house and out-

buildings raised during the first half of the eighteenth century by James Lindall. Ultimately, the property had been sold to Captain John Gardner, whose widow continued to occupy the house and to lease portions of it to boarders for almost forty years after her husband's death in 1783. Then, in May 1824, it was acquired from the Gardners by John Andrew, a Salem merchant, who, in turn, disposed of it to the East India Marine Hall Corporation. The old house was removed, and East India Marine Hall began to rise from the ground.

To illustrate every change in the Hall and its neighbors over a period of one hundred and fifty years would require dozens of drawings; several hundred might be necessary to suggest the continuous shifting of signboards, trade signs, awnings, and curbside appurtenances alone, but no purpose could be served by attempting an exercise of such fatiguing proportions.

Fourteen do the job well enough, for they are sufficient to demonstrate the remarkable metamorphosis of a 300-foot strip of street frontage in an old New England seaport community.

A vantage point has been taken from the northwest corner of St. Peter Street, which ceased to exist in this location during the summer of 1973, but from which,

historically, East India Marine Hall had always been viewed to best advantage. Prints, sketches, woodcuts, photographs, and an assortment of maps and documents have provided the basis upon which the accompanying illustrations have been prepared.

PHILIP CHADWICK FOSTER SMITH

#### SKETCH 1: 1824

As originally designed, East India Marine Hall was intended to include third floor pavilions at its northern and southern ends, as well as an unnecessarily pretentious side entrance on the west. That it was not built this way suggests the growing prudence on the parts of the East India Marine Society and of the Hall Corporation during the preliminary phases of planning and construction. The Society required for itself a spacious hall on the second floor; the Corporation sought convenient rooms at ground level from which income-producing rents could be derived. The pavilions, therefore, were expendable. So was an ornate side entry, be-

cause the house on the adjacent lot would have hidden it almost entirely from view in any case. Stripped of these features, with a gable roof substituted for the pavilions, the granite and brick facades of East India Marine Hall began to take on substance during the late summer of 1824. The contractor was William Roberts, whose other work around Salem was to include the Bowker Block on the opposite side of Essex Street, St. Peter's Church, the Salem Jail, the old granite Railway Station pulled down during the mid-1950s, and portions of the Custom House on Derby Street.





1824

## SKETCH 2: 1825

When dedicated in October 1825 by President of the United States John Quincy Adams, East India Marine Hall was flanked exclusively by residential structures.

On the western side, behind a garden, stood the mansion built in 1750 by Benjamin Pickman (1708-1773) and occupied successively by his son Benjamin (1740-1819) and grandson Benjamin (1763-1843). All had become eminent merchants in the town, although the second of the name had been a Loyalist during the Revolution but had returned to Salem in the 1780s where he had been reclaimed by public opinion and for many years afterwards held the post of Town Treasurer.

The gambrel-roof house on the eastern side of the Hall had been built in 1765 by the father of its present occupant, Captain Peter Lander. Captain Peter's son, Peter, Jr., was a member of the East India Marine Society and was its Secretary at the time the Hall was constructed.

Beside it, next but one house to the junction of

Liberty Street further east, was a house erected in 1700. No likeness of it seems to have survived; that delineated here is entirely conjectural but suggests the space it occupied. For many years after the French and Indian War it was used as a public house, first by a Scotsman named Somerville and then by such well-known Salem tavern keepers as William Goodhue and Samuel Robinson. In 1825, it was owned by Gilbert Chadwick, victualler, who had rented it for some years before he was finally able to purchase it in 1795 from Daniel Rindge of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

At the junction of Essex and Liberty Streets stood the Lynde-Oliver House, built by Major William Browne in 1700 as a wedding gift to his daughter Mary, wife of Judge Benjamin Lynde (1666-1745). It became the home of their son, Judge Benjamin Lynde, Jr. (1700-1781); his son-in-law, Judge Andrew Oliver (1731-1799); and Oliver's son, Dr. Benjamin Lynde Oliver (1760-1835).



1825

### SKETCH 3: 1825-1845

In 1836, a year after Dr. Benjamin Lynde Oliver's death, the Lynde-Oliver estate was sold at public auction when it was purchased by Dr. Daniel Oliver, then of Hanover, New Hampshire, but later of Boston. It would seem that the ancient house disappeared almost immediately. The site soon earned the local nickname of "Oliver's Hollow" from the gaping cellar hole that remained on the corner until well into the 1840s.

It was a period of high mortality among the owners of the homes neighboring East India Marine Hall.

Gilbert Chadwick died in his eighties in 1829, two days after arsonists had set fire to his shop and barn, but his widow and several of the younger generation continued to dwell in the house. His son-in-law, Cap-

tain Henry Gardner Bridges, was a member of the East India Marine Society.

When Captain Peter Lander died in 1834, the oldest citizen of Salem at the time, he had been predeceased by his son Peter. The house therefore descended to another son, Edward, but when Edward entered into bankruptcy in 1843 the property was sold to merchant Gamaliel Hodges.

The last of the Benjamin Pickmans died in 1843. The elegant family mansion, built with money derived from the cod fisheries and inhabited by the family for nearly a century, was sold by the heirs in 1844 to merchant William Henry Neal.

The character of the region was to undergo a gradual transformation before the end of the decade.



1825-1845



#### SKETCH 4: 1845-1850

The first major change to the area surrounding East India Marine Hall occurred during the late 1840s when a three-story brick commercial block was erected by John Kinsman on the site of the Lynde-Oliver and Chadwick Houses.

Kinsman, originally styled a housewright, but who later became Superintendent of the Eastern Rail Road, acquired the Lynde-Oliver property from Daniel Oliver's widow in 1844. Even before he obtained a clear and final title to the land he began talking about erecting a building on the lot. Smelling trouble, the Chadwicks bought from Gamaliel Hodges in May 1844 a small, additional piece of land as a buffer strip between

their own and Kinsman's property. As talk of Kinsman's "intended building" became more prevalent, the Chadwicks took alarm, and the contention which ensued over the common boundary had to be referred to impartial referees for settlement. Two years later in 1846, however, the Chadwicks finally decided to sell their Essex Street house to Kinsman. He promptly caused it to be removed.

Borrowing heavily from David Augustus Neal, President of the Eastern Rail Road, and from Leverett Saltonstall, Kinsman built his commercial block which became known as the Lynde Block or "Lynde Place."



1845-1850

#### SKETCH 5: 1850-1865

After Gamaliel Hodges died, the former Lander House was sold in May 1851 to his son John by the other heirs. He, or perhaps his father before him, converted it for uses other than residential, for it became the address of lawyers' offices, several small retail establishments, and, for a few years, even served to house the Saltonstall High School for Girls.

William Henry Neal, who had purchased the Pickman estate on the opposite side of East India Marine

Hall, also died, and the property was put up for auction. It was bought by Sarah Elizabeth LeMaster, single woman, sometimes described as an inhabitant of Salem but other times as a resident of the nearby town of Wenham. In 1856, she resold it to her sister, Miss Lydia LeMaster. Before 1859, the two of them had built a block of stores out over the garden to the street, and the once substantial mansion went into a decline from which it never recovered.



1850-1865

#### SKETCH 6: 1866

At half past eleven on the night of 14 May 1866, a fire of unknown origin broke out in a stable at the rear of the Lander-Hodges House and then began a clockwise sweep through the dense cluster of buildings in the center of the block. Before long, the flames had communicated not only to the Lander-Hodges House but also to the Lynde Block and several dwellings on Liberty Street. Despite the strenuous exertions of the firefighters, who were hampered by an inadequate supply of water, none of those involved could be saved. The coving on the eastern side of East India Marine Hall also caught, but, providentially, the Hall suffered only

minor damage and the collections inside came to no particular harm.

By this time, the Lynde Block was owned by Francis Peabody, a wealthy manufacturer and influential citizen of Salem, who had purchased it from John Kinsman in 1852. In September 1866, Peabody supplemented his real estate holdings in the area by acquiring from John Hodges the land upon which the Lander House had stood. He now owned the whole street frontage from the eastern property line of the East India Marine Hall Corporation to Liberty Street.





1866

## SKETCH 7: 1867-1890

In 1867, the museum of the East India Marine Society, which had become a financial burden to the organization, and the natural history collections of the Essex Institute came together in East India Marine Hall as the "Peabody Academy of Science." This had come about as the result of an endowment offered by philanthropist George Peabody, a man of local birth who had become one of the principal bankers of London. The new institution would be governed by a self-perpetuating board of Peabody-appointed Trustees.

President of these Trustees (as well as George Peabody's fourth cousin) was Francis Peabody, the owner of the adjacent property. He died in October 1867, but already plans had been made to build commercial structures on the fire-ravaged site next to the Hall. A second Lynde Block of two stories rather than three sprang up from the ashes of the first. Between it and

the Hall, there arose before the end of the decade an odd little building with a roof shaped like a Chinese pagoda. It also resembled an old-fashioned tent of the type found at country fairs or expositions. It became known instantly as "The Pavilion."

The original occupant was David Conrad who sold trimmings, laces, kid gloves, corsets, skirts, and other millinery finery. He remained in the Pavilion building until 1876 when he removed to larger quarters further along Essex Street and in 1884 to a large shop on Winter Street, Boston.

Gas street lamps had been lighted for the first time in Salem on Christmas Day 1850; electricity followed thirty-one years later. By the end of the 1880s, unsightly electric light poles, with their network of wires, had blighted the landscape in front of the Hall.



1867-1890

### SKETCH 8: 1890-1906

In 1886, the Trustees of the Peabody Academy of Science added a new wing called Academy Hall to the southeastern corner of East India Marine Hall. Although it is not visible from the vantage point of these sketches, it nonetheless was an extremely important addition to the institution and included on the ground floor under the East Hall gallery a 300-seat auditorium with a sloping floor and raised stage. Access to it was by means of an alleyway along the eastern side of the Hall. Lecture-goers were protected from the elements by a wooden lean-to roof running the length of the building.

By 1900, the shutters that had covered the second-floor windows on the western side of the Hall rotted away and were not replaced. The windows themselves had probably been bricked up since the 1830s, as had been the intention of the Society, but this cannot be stated with certainty. The Pickman-LeMaster House and shops had changed, too. An open ballustrade now surmounted the stores while the shingles on the roof

of the house itself had given way to wrinkled tar paper and battens.

During the year 1904, the ground-floor front rooms of East India Marine Hall were remodeled. Until then they had been rented to such enterprises as the Oriental Insurance Company, the Asiatic Bank, the Naumkeag Bank, the Salem Marine Insurance Company, Nathan Peirce, Jr.'s News Room and Collection Office, the Gas Light Company, and numerous shipping merchants' offices, milliners, and retailers. Now, the space was reclaimed for museum use. The three doors to Essex Street were changed into windows, a wrought-iron railing was installed out front, the last of the chimneys on the western roof were removed, and a new entrance corridor was constructed in the space that had been the passageway between the Hall and the Pickman-LeMaster property.

The Marine Room was dedicated 31 January 1905. The enormous anchor, soon to become a familiar landmark, was placed before the building the next year.



1890-1906

### SKETCH 9: 1907-1929

Outwardly, save for occasional modernization of the Lynde Block and the Pickman House store fronts and the merciful disappearance of the light poles, no striking changes occurred in the vicinity until 1929. On 18 April 1929, the cornerstone was laid for an enclosed corridor to replace the open shed roof leading into Academy Hall. It was designed to emulate the style of the entrance corridor on the opposite side and to balance it.

The Museum had been undergoing other changes within. Another gallery, Weld Hall, was constructed behind Academy Hall in 1907; in 1910, the Museum purchased what was left of the Pickman House with its fronting stores from the LeMaster heirs; in 1915, it acquired the Pavilion building next door on the other side; and that same year officially changed its name from the Peabody Academy of Science to the Peabody Museum of Salem.





1907-1929

#### SKETCH 10: 1930-1943

Long before the Pickman House had been acquired by the Museum it had become an anonymous building, noticed by few and largely stripped of its architectural embellishments. It was beyond repair or improvement. It came as a surprise to no one, therefore, when the Salem Building Inspector finally condemned it in November 1940 and ordered it to be torn down as speedily as possible to prevent the threat of fire in the neighborhood. The fronting stores,

however, would remain for another twenty-two years.

The interior of East India Marine Hall underwent extensive remodeling during the years 1942 and 1943 when the galleries and mezzanines installed after 1867 in the Great Hall upstairs were ripped out and the space was restored to its original state when actively used by the East India Marine Society. At the same time, the lower-floor windows were replaced with lights more in keeping with the scale of the building.



1930-1943

### SKETCH 11: 1944-1963

The Pickman House stores, after more than a century of use, were pulled down during the autumn of 1962. Their removal exposed to view for the first time the combined Loring Room and Crowninshield Gallery wing which had been erected off the southwestern corner of East India Marine Hall in 1953. A wrought-iron fence was placed along the Essex Street pavement, and during the summer of 1963 a concrete block wall

was constructed across the back of the lot and a Japanese Garden was created in front.

Within, Academy Hall had been converted into exhibition galleries, another Crowninshield Gallery was built in the center of the complex, a new library wing was given by the Phillips and Saltonstall families, and Academy Hall Corridor became a utilitarian exhibition area.



1944-1963

P.C.E.S.

SKETCH 12: 1963-1973

By 1967, the old Pavilion building had become a liability and was torn down that autumn to make way for the Peabody Museum's contemplated expansion to the east. Two years later, in 1969, the Museum was able to

acquire the Lynde Block, which continued to be rented to retailers until the expansion plans were formalized in 1973.





1963-1973

SKETCH 13: 1973-1974

The expansion program, which had been studied and restudied for more than six years, finally bore fruit in December 1973 when a contract was signed for the construction of an enormous new wing to run the length of Essex Street from East India Marine Hall to the corner of Liberty Street.

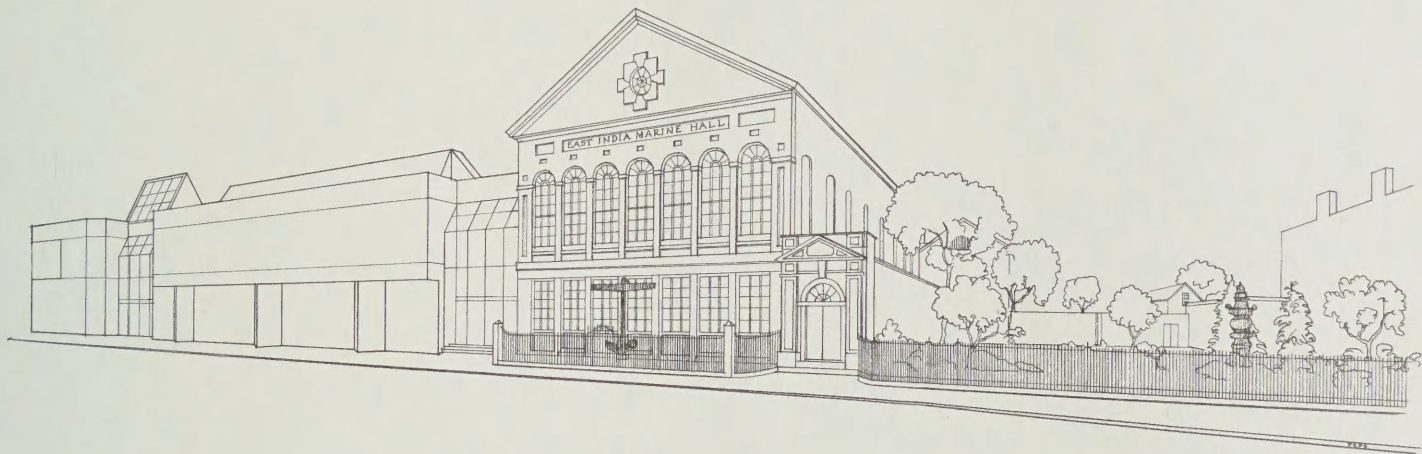
Neither the structurally deficient Academy Hall Corridor nor the much-abused Lynde Block could be incorporated into the final design for the new wing. Both were demolished before the last of January 1974.



1973-1974

SKETCH 14: 1974

The metamorphosis of East India Marine Hall and its neighbors over the period of one hundred and fifty years had been remarkable. Only one thing had remained relatively constant throughout that entire period: the elegant granite facade of East India Marine Hall.



1974





Philips Library



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